

For many years **Small Christian Communities** (SCC) have been growing in our parish. Groups of people have been gathering for prayer, faith sharing, and mutual support. Small Christian

Communities continue to flourish and bring new spirit and life to the community. The parish and the SCC need each other, and they bless each other.

I am aware that our community continues to grow weekly. I am concerned that there may be people who have yet to feel a sense of belonging to the parish. We are blessed with such large and spirit-filled congregations weekly and yet there may be people who feel alone in the crowd. To respond to the parishioners' need to feel a greater sense of belonging, I plan, with the SCC Core Group formed and trained by Jim Silva, to offer parishioners opportunities to meet in small groups. In a recent survey of SCC, participants indicated that the experience increased their sense of belonging in their parish.

Some people have the misunderstanding that small communities are another parish program. They are not that at all. While communities may use a specific program periodically, for example during Advent, they are not a program but a way of being church that is supportive not only of a personal faith journey but, by nature, a reflection of the communal journey of the people of God.

I would like to offer parishioners an opportunity to join existing groups or to meet others in

similar life situations and begin an SCC. Some examples may be: Parishioners who have completed the RCIA/Returning Catholics/Adult Confirmation programs, parents completing the monthly Baptism Process, caregivers, families with children experiencing mental illness, grandparents parenting their children's children, young families with no extended family locally, adoptive/foster parents, parishioners who have completed the grief/divorced/separated ministry groups., new families to the parish with young children, parents of teens, married couples, families caring for aging parents, single people...

SCCs are a wonderful way to articulate the connections between faith and life. Cardinal John Henry Newman once said that **"Great holiness is lost to the Church because people refuse to tell their stories"**. Through SCC, parishioners have an environment to tell their stories and have their stories honored in faith and love.

Coming together in Small Christian Communities provides mutual support, builds healthy relationships, and empowers members to grow in faith as well as have greater belonging to the parish. We plan to focus on Evangelization for the next two years. Why not invite your non-Catholic friends to join your SCC or to join you in beginning a group? These groups are marvelous ways to introduce people to our church.

I will be meeting with the SCC Core Group very soon. We will plan a meeting in September to gather all those interested in joining SCC. Training in facilitating the groups will be provided. In the meantime I would be delighted to receive your feedback and ideas.

Fr. Padraig


LITURGICAL MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Team 3 A – Scheduled for August 16 & 17
Team 4 A – Scheduled for August 23 & 24

VINEYARD BRANCHES NCC

Vineyard Branches NCC will have a summer gathering on **Sunday, August 17 at 4:00 PM** at the home of John & Fran Glavin. Bring your own meat to barbecue and a dish to share. You may invite guests to attend with you. Please RSVP to John or Fran at (925) 462-3191

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

Plate Collections & Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT) 

July Budget	\$123,500.00
July Collections	\$127,627.46
Variance from Year-To-Date Budget	(0.63%)

Catholic University/Latin America	\$5,504.00
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DEACON FORMATION

Men interested in the new deacon class are invited to obtain more information about the program and register for discernment sessions by contacting Peggy Maurer at (510) 267-8348 or pmaurer@oakdiocese.org. Discernment sessions are scheduled on the following date:

**Sunday, August 17
2:00 to 5:00 PM**

Our Lady of Grace Parish Hall, Castro Valley

(Attendance session is required by both inquirer and wife, if married.)

GRIEF SUPPORT

The death of a loved one is unlike any other loss. Whether or not the death was sudden and tragic, or one with warning and preparation, the reality of death leaves most of us in a state of shock, confusion and sadness. Grieving people need time and space to honor their grief. Please join us on **Thursday, August 14 at 7:30 PM at St. Elizabeth Seton**. These meetings are open to all, regardless of religious orientation. Please call Joan at 828-6864 if you have any questions.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- **Ministry Signup Sunday.** August 23 & 24.
- **CCOP Annual Picnic.** Alameda Fairgrounds Bernal Greens on **Sunday, September 21, 2008 from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM**. The day will start with a **special mass at 10:00 AM** in the amphitheater -- picnic will follow.
- **The Cathedral of Christ the Light.** Dedication and consecration of the Cathedral will be held on **Thursday, September 25, 2008 at 2:00 PM**.
- **Celebration of Marriage.** Special Liturgy to celebrate wedding anniversaries on **September 27 at St. Augustine Church - 5:00 PM**. Reception to follow at the Parish Hall.
- **John Paul II Activity Center Dedication.** The dedication is scheduled for **November 23, 2008 at 2:00 PM**.

NEWS FROM FAITH FORMATION

Attention Parents: The Faith Formation Office reopened August 4th. There is still time to register your children for the 2008/2009 year.

Don't forget that **Placement Day is Sunday, August 24th from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM** for families in our Elementary and Preschool programs. Those families will receive a letter assigning them to a time slot on the 24th to complete the registration process by picking the day/time of their child's class. To attend Placement Day you must have already turned in your registration forms to the Faith formation Office. Any questions? Call (925) 846-3531.

PARISH PICTORIAL DIRECTORY UPDATE

Time is running out....Remaining days to sign-up for your photography session at St. Augustine's Hall are:

August 15 – 16 ♦ August 18 - 23

We need **YOU** to make our upcoming 2008 Parish Pictorial Directory complete! You will be photographed, view your images, and select your directory pose in **ONE** trip. Every family receives a **complimentary** 8 x 10 portrait and a directory for participating. There is no sitting fee and there is no cost to the church. You will have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits at competitive prices if **YOU** choose.

Sign up today!!

Go online www.catholicsofpleasanton.org and click the Portrait Sign Up link, **or** email our Directory Coordinator at esther@edirectories.biz **or** call Esther at (510) 381-0168.

Submitted Photos: If you are not able to make an appointment to have your photograph taken for the directory, you may "submit" a photo. Please email your photo to esther@edirectories.biz or mail your photograph to Esther McClay at 20 Foothill Place, Pleasanton 94588. Please include the names of everyone in the photo, your telephone number and address (so we can return the photo). If the photograph was taken by a professional, please attach a model release statement from the photographer. The cost to submit a photo is \$15.00 and you will receive a directory for participating. Please make your check payable to E Directories. The deadline for all submitted photos is **August 15**.